

# File Note

**Project:** 4015\_019\_Marylebone NP  
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## NOTE OF WORKSHOP: 26 NOVEMBER 2015

1. The purpose of this paper is to capture the outcome of the Marylebone Neighbourhood Plan (MNP) visioning workshop held with the Steering Group on 26 November 2015 and to make recommendations for the consideration of the Steering Group. There recommendations related to:

- The land use planning policy scope of the MNP
- Further engagement activities and evidence analysis
- The project plan through to the submission of MNP

2. The recommendations reflect not just the outcome of the workshop but also our initial insights into the national and local planning policy context of the MNP. Specifically, the MNP must meet a series of 'basic conditions' relating to its general conformity with that policy context. The examination of the MNP in due course will focus on how those conditions have been met, before it goes to referendum.

3. We have also reflected on the special challenges facing the governance and management of the MNP, given its neighbourhood area has been designated a 'business area'. It is important that both the residential and business communities of the area are engaged in preparing the MNP. They both need to see beneficial outcomes and both need to find ways of resolving any conflicts between them before the MNP is examined and put to referendum.

4. A failure to address these challenges may result in the examiner having to play referee, which they very much want to avoid. It may also run the risk of the residential and business communities delivering opposite referendum results, leaving the local planning authority, Westminster City Council (WCC), with the unenviable task of deciding which of the two communities to back in either making the plan or not.

5. As a general principle therefore, the Forum, its Steering Group and any task groups formed (see later) must ensure that they are sufficiently representative of residents and business interests and must strive to accommodate different views in their work and decisions.

## Workshop Observations

6. The workshop comprised a facilitated discussion aimed at answering three core questions:

1. How has the planning system served to make the Marylebone area a successful place to live, work, shop, trade and visit, or not?
2. How do we anticipate the area will change in the next ten years or so and why?
3. What could the planning system do to manage this change successfully and what part should the MNP play?

7. The following observations were made:

- The area has changed significantly over the last decade or so, with a change in the demographic profile of residents, businesses and traders reflecting a more affluent and high-end commercial community, although the western edge of the area adjoining Edgware Road has not changed as much
- There has been a loss of affordable homes, lower cost businesses and retail premises across almost all of the area – the Core CAZ policy has allowed for some land use swaps with buildings in the remaining CAZ area
- The significant heritage assets (Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings) have driven development management policy leading to little change in the external building fabric, which in turn has increased the appeal of the area to investors
- However, major changes to the internal building fabric ('facadism') within the Conservation Areas has led to significant intensifications of use with the pressures they bring on local infrastructure
- Offices are being lost in some places, resulting in changes in the retail mix of some frontages and less daytime and evening employee activity
- Drinking establishments have been retained but most have changed to reflect the changes in demographics
- Marylebone Station getting a lot busier and forecast to handle 3m passengers a year in the next few years with additional services and much of this footfall will be between the station and Baker Street tube station; noted too that the CrossRail station at New Bond Street will increase footfall and commercial activity in this vicinity, including the MNP area north of Oxford Street
- There is considerable change expected on some fringes of the area, notably on its western (Paddington Opportunity Area, North Westminster Economic Development Area/Queens Park/Church Street and Marble Arch) and southern (West End) edges that may increase pressure for changes of use and demands on road space and scarce public realm
- There is a Conservation Area Audit for all six of the Areas in Marylebone – some are older than others but all offer important design guidance that WCC uses in considering planning applications
- Businesses and landowners perceive that WCC is rigorous in applying design standards but there may be some policy elements relating to mews courts and roof extensions where policy outcomes have been undesirable

- Residents perceive that WCC has not been sufficiently stringent in its use of the design guidance, which has led to inappropriate schemes (often behind the retention of the original facades)
- There is a close but occasionally inconsistent relationship between planning application and licensing decisions affecting some commercial properties
- There is a proliferation of advertising in those parts of the area where advertisement consent is not required, e.g. phone boxes, that detracts from the streetscene appearance
- Air pollution data at street level is above standards in many parts of the area which affects residential and business amenity alike
- Changes to short lettings regulations has led to a loss of lower cost homes in the Edgware Road area
- The Portland Place Special Policy Area has seen some losses of institutional buildings to education and other uses that may bring into question its longer term validity
- The Harley Street Special Policy Area appears to have remained mostly intact but its boundary may need changing to reflect changes of use at its edges
- WCC parking standards are requiring the provision of too many spaces in new development schemes, encouraging greater vehicle movements in an already crowded highway space – some spaces are not being used by occupiers but are being 'sublet' to others but most residents need a parking space and any losses that can't be replaced will be objected to
- A significant increase in internet deliveries to employees in the area has created traffic problems near large office locations
- Businesses consider the pedestrian environment is getting poorer as key pavements are not wide enough to provide sufficient safe capacity and residents may share this view
- There remain too few publically accessible open spaces for the amenity of residents, employees and visitors
- There is an initiative to increase street tree planting to 'green' parts of the area but this is not always consistent with the historic character of some Conservation Areas
- Traffic management ideas include making Baker Street and Gloucester Place two way streets and removing buses from Oxford Street may have significant impacts on the area if implemented in years to come

### **Additional Observations**

8. The booklets published by WCC over the last year to inform its new Local Plan include a number of insights and questions that are relevant to this area, not all of which were discussed at the workshop. For completeness, some additional observations are noted here:

- Central Activity Zone (CAZ) – remove the 'Core CAZ' designation and 'Named Streets' in Marylebone but continue to reflect residential character of areas like Marylebone – plus extend CAZ into area north of Marylebone Station and Edgware Road/Church Street? How may this affect mixed use schemes and land use swaps?
- West End – a new policy designation? Sites around New Bond Street for redevelopment that do not contribute positively to heritage character?

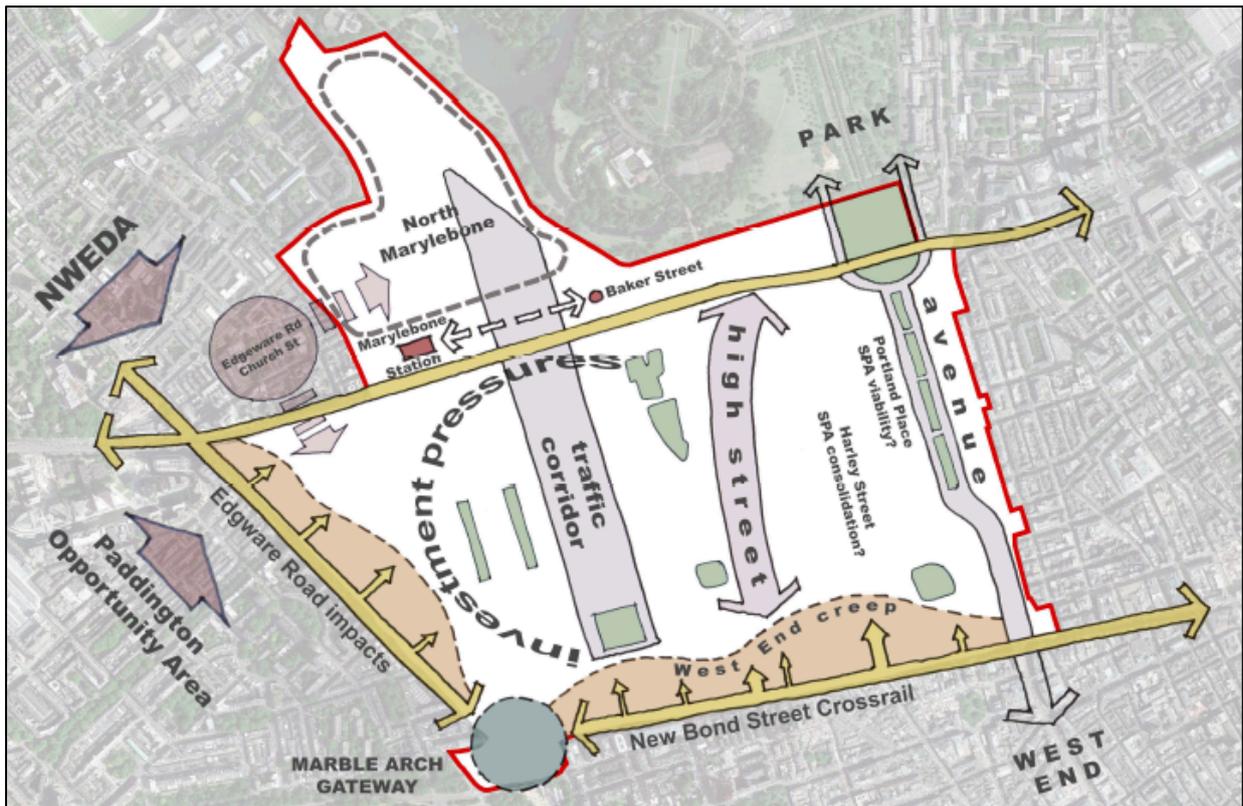
Could and should the residential areas north of Oxford Street accommodate further commercial creep of the West End?

- Edgware Road Stress Area/Cumulative Impact Area – new policy CM24 controlling shisha smoking in outdoor areas – boundary? Does it balance residential amenity with the needs of local businesses?
- Entertainment venues – protect from amenity conflicts with new nearby homes – new policy CM22.2 for theatres but are there other types of venue in the area that warrant similar protection?
- Hotels/conference venues – changes to policy S23 in predominantly residential areas – should it apply in this area?
- Portland Place SPA – new policy CM2.2 – will this manage the area effectively are has there been too much change?
- Design – changes to policies on infill (CM28.1), alterations (CM28.4) and shop fronts (CM28.7) – are they relevant to this area?
- Traffic – a new road hierarchy policy (CM41.2) and traffic management (CM41.3) – how may this hierarchy enable new public realm spaces and improvements to be realised?

## Insights

9. As a result of these observations, we have a number of insights on how the area may change in the coming years, both from within and from changes beyond its edges. These in turn point to possible policy ideas for the MNP to pursue:

- There is extensive, detailed, up-to-date development plan policy coverage of the whole MNP area
- Much of the change experienced and observable in the area cannot be directly controlled by the current land use planning system, though some indirect influences are possible
- The demographic and land use trends over the last few years are unlikely to change significantly in the coming years, which will lead to greater wealth to invest in maintaining the heritage of the area and perhaps into public realm and traffic management improvements
- Those changes are unlikely to lead to a reversal in the loss of community infrastructure, as the increasingly affluent population comes to rely less on public services like schools and health centres
- The shift from lower value employment to high value residential uses and from lower to higher value retail/commercial uses is likely to continue
- There will be greater pressure on the existing public realm, from highways capacity to parking to green spaces
- These trends may ripple out to the western and northern edges to Edgware Road and north of the Marylebone Road – the North Marylebone area appears less well covered by WCC Local Plan thinking and is not as characteristic of the MNP area and may benefit from a clearer understanding of its future role
- There are likely to be many challenges to maintaining the type of residential amenity enjoyed by the longer standing residential community, as the nature of that community, and its expectations of amenity and the public realm, changes



Insights Plan

- The pace, scale and nature of these changes will be influenced by the extent to which the quality and capacity of the public realm can be improved, otherwise it is possible that the character and amenity value of the area may deteriorate with too many people and vehicles competing for space scarce space 24-7
- The public realm is ultimately created and maintained by the combination of land use policy and land management working in tandem to ensure investments are made in the right place at the right time
- It is therefore plausible that a neighbourhood plan comprising statutory land use policies and elements of other public and land management strategies – transport planning/highways management/public car parking, licensing, policing, CIL, BID strategy, estate asset management strategy for example – may be deployed as a 'Marylebone plc corporate plan' that leads and co-ordinates change in the MNP area over the next 20 years (note: only the statutory land use planning policies would be examined and voted on in the MNP process)
- However, we are not aware of any precedent for such an approach to neighbourhood planning in London or anywhere else, which will require innovation and resourcing by the MNP Forum
- The MNP therefore faces a choice on its future scope: either to focus entirely on a small range of development management policy refinements or to pursue what may be perceived as a more radical purpose – there is no 'right or wrong' answer but they will lead to very different outcomes

## Actions

10. The workshop was intended to focus on scoping the land use policy space for the MNP. The actions below are therefore recommended as a means of informing the extent to which that policy space can be occupied and in what ways. This work may inevitably lead to dependencies with non-statutory planning issues, in which case these may be interrogated further as the Steering Group wishes.

1. Special Policy Area Review:
  - a. Portland Place\*
  - b. Harley Street\*
  - c. New Bond Street/West End\*\*
  - d. Edgware Road CIA\*\*
  - e. North Marylebone CAZ extension\*\*

*Review the existing SPA policy boundaries\* and distinct policy provisions. Are the boundaries still right? Are those provisions still relevant? How do they relate to their neighbouring areas? Review the potential for new policy areas\*\*. Where should the boundaries be drawn? What specific provisions should be made? How do they relate to their neighbouring areas? In all area types, identify any key, corresponding non-statutory issues on which success may depend. In all cases, provide any relevant statistical evidence to support assumptions and recommendations. Show conclusions on a plan as necessary.*

2. Design Policy Review:
  - a. Conservation Areas\*
  - b. Other areas\*\*

*Review the Conservation Area Audits\* to identify specific design principles in each Conservation Area that may be included in a MNP policy for each Area. Review those parts of the MNP area that are not in a Conservation Area\*\*. Are there distinct character areas that, irrespective of the absence of heritage value, have some distinguishing design features that are common enough to identify in a policy?*

3. On Street/Off Street Parking\* & Traffic Management\*\* Review

*\*Review the current initiatives (Baker Street/Gloucester Place, Oxford Street, others?) to identify their pros and cons, especially in relation to their potential effects across the rest of the MNP area. Review WCC proposed new road hierarchy and identify opportunities for closing or managing traffic to create new public realm opportunities. Review WCC parking standards and compare pros and cons with alternative option of no spaces in new developments. Show on a plan.*

*\*\*Quantify (or estimate using existing data sets) the number of public and private off-street and on-street car parking spaces by ED and relate to the residential and office populations of each ED. Identify opportunities to remove on-street spaces and to create new off-street spaces in new development schemes or public realm projects. Show on a plan.*

#### 4. Public Realm\* & Key Pedestrian/Cycle Routes\*\* Review

*\*Review WCC open space/play space data. Identify opportunities for new public realm on land outside of the highway. Identify opportunities for new street tree planting/green walls and other public realm improvements that take account of heritage constraints. Show on a plan.*

*\*\*Review existing main pedestrian routes (e.g. highest footfall) and anticipate future increases in footfall (e.g. between Marylebone Station and Baker Street). Identify existing and forecast pavement capacity problems. Show on a plan. Review existing cycleway network and cycle parking infrastructure (e.g. parking, cycle lanes) and identify capacity/safety problems. Show on a plan.*

#### 5. Development Management Policy Review:

##### a. Advertisements

*In those areas with permitted development rights for advertisement control, identify amenity/visual problems (e.g. phone boxes). Show on a plan. Review existing WCC advertisement policy to identify any changes necessary for the MNP area.*

##### b. Servicing and deliveries

*Identify known locations with frequent servicing and delivery problems. Show on a plan. Review existing WCC servicing/delivery policy to identify any changes necessary for the MNP area.*

##### c. Cultural venues nuisance

*Identify cultural venues (e.g. theatres, music etc) that warrant protection from future problems with local amenity conflicts with residential areas. Show on a Plan.*

11. Each action should be addressed by a task team chaired by a member of the Steering Group but comprising the relevant local expertise and interest (see below). At a minimum, their membership must include businesses and residents from different parts of the area within the constraints of maintaining a practical group number.

12. All the tasks should be completed with a single report making recommendations to the Steering Group in respect of a) specific policies for inclusion in the statutory planning section of the document, b) any non-statutory issues that are key to successful policy implementation and c) who should be consulted on the conclusions and how, before policies are finalised for the Pre Submission Plan. Where groups cannot agree a consensus position – and that is a valid outcome – then the report should indicate where there are differences and how they may be resolved in due course.



Project Management Chart

13. It is expected that each task team will want to engage with a range of relevant stakeholders during their work. It will be for the steering group to determine if there may be benefits in co-ordinating such consultations, especially with residents, businesses and employees, through either a generic or stakeholder-specific questionnaire/survey.

14. During the task team work, the steering group should obtain interim reports to identify as early as possible any potential conflicts between emerging policy/proposal ideas and to steer the teams to resolve those conflicts if possible. If there remain genuine unresolvable conflicts, then the group may wish to present them as alternative options in an informal consultation draft version of the MNP. Such a consultation exercise may, in any event, be desirable for the group to test the water on the scope and emerging policy ideas before it commits itself to the Pre Submission version, by which time all such matters must be resolved and choices made. An informal consultation exercise is not governed by the Regulations, so can take any form the group requires to obtain the richness in feedback necessary to guide the completion of the Pre Submission Plan.

15. It is acknowledged that, even though the purpose of this report is to focus the action plan on key policy idea areas, the amount of work needed across these actions is not inconsiderable. A lot will be expected of resident volunteers and of busy business people. RCOH can make some provision for support and there may be other resources made available, but this cannot be a substitute for local community effort if the MNP is to succeed at the referendum stage.

## **The AGM Session**

16. It is recommended that a summary of the potential policy scope set out in this report is presented as an item to the AGM to show the progress being made on the project. As well as informing this wider group of stakeholders of the issues the steering group wishes to pursue with the MNP, the group may also be able to recruit people to the five task teams to increase the available volunteer resource.

## **Conclusion**

17. In general terms, the workshop discussion indicated that there is some policy space for the MNP to occupy in filling gaps in the Westminster development plan and in refining existing policies to better suit the Marylebone area. There may also be benefits in the non-statutory part of the plan document highlighting a number of closely-related development management and infrastructure project initiatives, which may have greater leverage over public and private sector decision makers in the longer term.

18. However, it is one thing to define the space to be occupied, but another to determine how best to do that, especially when the views of different stakeholder groups have to be considered. Hopefully, this note and the action plan will encourage the Steering Group, bolstered by the AGM, to make good progress and submit the MNP for examination in 2016.